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WHAT BECOMES OF THE RIND?

Of all the occupations that exercise the ordinary energies of human beings, the most abstracting is that of sucking an orange. It seems to employ the whole faculties for the time being. There is an earnestness of purpose in the individual so employed—an impassioned determination to accomplish what he has undertaken—that creates a kindred excitement in the bystanders. His air is thoughtful; his eye severe, not to say relentless; and although his mouth is full of inarticulate sounds, conversation is out of the question. But the mind is busy although the tongue is silent; and when the deed is accomplished, the collapsed spheroid seems to swell anew with the ideas to which the exercise had given birth. One of these ideas we shall catch and fix, for occurring as it did to ourselves, it is our own property: it was contained in the question that rose suddenly in our mind as we looked at the ruin we had made—What becomes of the rind?

And this is no light question; no unimportant or merely curious pastime for a vacant moment. In our case it became more and more serious; it clung and grappled, till it hung upon our meditations like the albatross round the neck of the Ancient Mariner. Only consider what a subject it embraces. The orange, it is true, and its congener the lemon, are Celestial fruits, owing their origin to the central flowery land; but thanks to the Portuguese, they are now domesticated in Europe, and placed within the reach of such northern countries as ours, where the cold prohibits their growth. Some of us no doubt force them in an artificial climate at the expense of perhaps half a guinea a piece; but the bulk of the nation are content to receive them from other regions at little more than the cost of apples. Now the quantity we thus import every year from the Azores, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Malta, and other places, is about 300,000 chests, and each of these chests contains about 650 oranges, all wrapped separately in paper. But besides these we are in the habit of purchasing a large quantity, entered at the custom-house by number, and several thousand pounds' worth, entered at value; so that the whole number of oranges and lemons we consume in this country may be reckoned modestly at some 220,000,000! Surely, then, it is not surprising that while engaged in the meditative employment alluded to we should demand with a feeling of strong interest—What becomes of the rind?

Everybody knows that Scotch marmalade uses up the rinds of a great many Seville oranges, as well as an unknown quantity of turnip skins and stalks of the

bore-cole, the latter known to the Caledonian manipulators of the preserve as 'kail-custocks.' Everybody understands also, that not a few of the rinds of edible oranges take up a position on the pavement, where their mission is to bring about the downfall of sundry passers-by, thus accomplishing the fracture of a not inconsiderable number—taking one month with another throughout the season—of arms, legs, and occiputs. It is likewise sufficiently public that a variety of drinks are assisted by the hot, pungent rinds of oranges and lemons as well as by the juice; but notwithstanding all these deductions, together with that of the great quantity thrown away as absolute refuse, we shall find a number of rinds unaccounted for large enough to puzzle by its magnitude the Statistical Society. This mystery, however, we have succeeded in penetrating, and although hardly hoping to carry the faith of the reader along with us, we proceed to unfold it: it is contained in the single monosyllable, *peel*.

Orange-peel, lemon-peel, citron-peel—these are the explanation: the last-mentioned fruit—imported from Sicily, Madeira, and the Canary Islands—being hardly distinguishable from a lemon except by its somewhat less acid pulp and more pungent rind. Even a very careless observer can hardly fail to be struck at this season by the heaps of those candied rinds displayed in the grocers' windows; but the wildest imagination could not guess at anything so extravagant as the quantity of the fruit thus used; and even when we learn that upwards of 600 tons of peel are manufactured in the year, it is a hopeless task to attempt to separate that prodigious bulk into its constituent parts. Six hundred tons of candied peel! of a condiment employed chiefly, if not wholly, in small quantities in the composition of puddings and cakes. Six hundred tons—12,000 hundredweights—1,344,000 pounds—21,504,000 ounces! But having once got possession of the fact, see how suggestive it is. Let us lump the puddings and cakes in one; let us call them all puddings—plum-puddings of four pounds' weight. We find, on consulting the best authorities—for we would not presume to dogmatise on such a subject—that the quantity of peel used in the composition of such a work is two ounces; and thus we are led to the conclusion that we Britishers devour in the course of a year 10,752,000 full-sized, respectable plum-puddings, irrespective of all such articles as are not adorned and enriched with candied peel.

Citrons intended for peel are imported in brine, but oranges and lemons in boxes. All are ripe in December, January, and February; but as it would be inconvenient to preserve so vast a quantity at the same time, the juice is squeezed out, and the collapsed fruit packed in pipes, with salt and water, till wanted. When the

time for preserving comes, it is taken from the pipes, and boiled till soft enough to admit of the pulp being scooped out; then the rind is laid in tubs or cisterns, and melted sugar poured over it. Here it lies for three or four weeks; and then the sugar is drained away, and the rind placed on trays in a room constructed for the purpose. It now assumes the name of 'dried peel,' and is stored away in the original orange and lemon boxes, till wanted for candying.

The other constituents of a plum-pudding add but little testimony on the subject of number. We cannot even guess the proportion of the 170,000 lbs. of nutmegs we receive from the Moluccas, and our own possessions in the Malay Straits, which may be thus employed; nor how much cinnamon Ceylon sends us for the purpose in her annual remittance of about 16,000 lbs.* nor what quantity of almonds is abstracted, with a similar view, from the 9000 cwt. we retain for our own consumption from the importations from Spain and Northern Africa. Currants are more to our purpose—for that small Corinth grape, the produce of the islands of Zante, Cephalonia, and Ithaca, and of the Morea, which comes to us so thickly coated with dust that we might seem to import vineyard and all—belongs, like the candied peel, almost exclusively to cakes and puddings. Of this fruit we devour in the year about 180,000 cwt. Raisins, being in more general use—at the dessert, for instance, and in making sweet wine—are in still greater demand: we cannot do with less than 240,000 cwt. of them. They are named from the place where they grow—such as Smyrna or Valencia; or from the grape—such as muscatel, bloom, or sultana; but the quality depends, we believe, chiefly on the mode of cure. The best are called raisins of the sun, and are preserved by cutting half through the stalks of the branches when nearly ripe, and leaving them to dry and candy in the genial rays. The next quality is gathered when completely ripe, dipped in a lye of the ashes of the burned tendrils, and spread out to bake in the sun. The inferior is dried in an oven. The black Smyrna grape is the cheapest; and the muscatels of Malaga are the dearest.

With flour, sugar, brandy, &c. we do not propose to interfere; for although the quantities of these articles thus consumed are immense, they bear but a small proportion to the whole importations. Eggs, however, are in a different category. Eggs are essential to the whole pudding race; and without having our minds opened, as they now are, to the full greatness of the plum-pudding, it would be difficult for us to discover the rationale of the vast trade we carry on in eggs. In our youthful days, when as yet plum-puddingism was with us in its early, empirical state, we used to consider 'egg-merchant' a term of ridicule, resembling the term 'timber-merchant' as applied to a vender of matches. But we now look with respect upon an egg-merchant, as an individual who manages an important part of the trade of this country with France and Belgium; not to mention its internal traffic in the same commodity. It strikes us, however, that on this subject the Frenchman and Belgian are wiser in their generation than ourselves. We could produce our own eggs easily enough if we would take the trouble; but rather than do this we hire them to do it for us, at an expense of several scores of thousands sterling in the year. They of course are very much obliged to us, though a little amused no doubt at the eccentricity of John Bull; and with the utmost alacrity supply us annually with about 90,000,000 eggs. John eats his foreign pudding, however—he is partial to foreign things—with great gravity, and only unbends into a smile when he sees his few chickens hopping about the

farmyard, the amusement of his children, or the little perquisite, perhaps, of his wife. He occasionally eats a newly-laid egg, the date of its birth being carefully registered upon the shell; thinks it a very clever thing in him to provide his own luxuries; and is decidedly of opinion that an English egg is worth two of the mounseers'. His neglect of this branch of rural economy, however, does not prevent his wondering sometimes how these fellows contrive to make the two ends of the year meet, when he himself finds it so difficult a matter to get plums to his pudding.

What becomes of the rind? We have shewn what becomes of the rind. We have shewn what apparently inconsiderable matters swell up the commerce of a great country. A plum-pudding is no joke. It assembles within itself the contributions of the whole world, and gives a fillip to industry among the most distant tribes and nations. But it is important likewise in other respects. Morally and socially considered, its influence is immense. At this season of the year, more especially, it is a bond of family union, and a symbol of friendly hospitality. We would not give a straw for that man, woman, or child, in the frank, cordial circles of Old English life, who does not hail its appearance on the table with a smile and a word of welcome. Look at its round, brown, honest, unctuous face, dotted with almonds and fragrant peel, surmounted with a sprig of holly, and radiant amid the flames of burning brandy! Who is for plum-pudding? We are, to be sure. What a rich perfume as it breaks on the plate! And this fragrant peel, so distinguishable amid the exhalations!—ha! Delicious!—that's what becomes of the rind!

A WORD ON CANADA.

LITTLE has been of late heard of Canada, either as a field of emigration or otherwise. It has, however, been going on in a satisfactory course of improvement: its population and resources are rapidly increasing, and in certain social arrangements, more particularly that relating to education, it may be said to be taking the lead of the mother-country. Some one recently made the observation, that as regards improvements of one kind or other, he believed more was now done in Canada than in any equal portion of the United States; but that while the States let everybody hear what they were about, Canada held its tongue. This was perhaps a view of affairs more jocular than real; but it is gratifying to have good authority for the fact, that Canada, taken all in all, is becoming a well-settled, intelligent, and highly prosperous country.

This state of things appears to have been gradually brought about within the last few years, and just in proportion as the colonists have been freed from the impracticable rule of the colonial office, and left to manage their own affairs: not that there is not something to complain of—yet when did Englishmen not grumble?—but in comparison with past times the present is assuredly a golden age of municipal freedom.

The rapid rise of Canada, and its present and prospective condition, form the subject of much interesting detail in a work of little pretension, but of genuine merit, by Mr James B. Brown, a person who resided in the colony for several years, and who, from his mercantile pursuits, enjoyed a tolerably good opportunity of acquiring useful information.*

We do not propose to go into a regular critique of Mr Brown's lucid production. Our readers would not thank us for doing so. All we intend is to present from it such an array of facts as will illustrate the general progress of Canadian affairs, and so give intending emigrants something to which they may look forward with a degree of confidence.

In 1791, the population of Upper Canada amounted

* This is from M'Culloch; but the home-consumption duty was lowered in 1848 from 6d. to 3d. per lb., and the consumption is now in all probability much greater.

* Views of Canada and the Colonists. Second Edition. Edinburgh: A. & C. Black. London: Longmans. 1851.

to 50,000; in 1842, it had reached 486,000; and in 1848, it had mounted up to 723,000—an increase in six years of 237,000. The whole colony, upper and lower, has now a population exceeding the half of that of Scotland, while its cultivated land already exceeds that of all Scotland. The ratio of increase of cultivation to increase in the number of people is startling. In England, during the first quarter of the present century, 37 acres were brought into cultivation for every 100 of increase of the population; but in Canada the increase of every 100 inhabitants adds 265 acres to the amount of cultivated land. The multiplication of cattle, horses, and other stock, is on a similarly large ratio. A very agreeable view of the increasing comforts of life is afforded in the fact, that the colony lately owned 4680 carriages for pleasure, whereas the number of these carriages in 1842 was only 980. All who saw the late Exhibition in London can bear witness to the elegance of workmanship in Canadian sleighs, and various articles of domestic use. The recent increase in the number of carriages, we are told by Mr Brown, is very much caused by an improvement in the roads. The great thoroughfares are now laid with planks, and these plank-roads have proved of great advantage to the country. It is to be regretted, however, that tolls have been introduced for the support of these improved thoroughfares. Toll-bars are the simple and rude expedient of a semi-barbarous people, and are in any view a costly apparatus to the public, for one-half the money levied goes to the keepers of the bars. We should be glad to see our Canadian brethren give us a lesson in dismissing toll-bars, and setting an example of a rational method of maintaining the public roads out of public resources.

Canada is one of the best customers of England; but it is under strong temptations to deal with the United States in preference—that is, to smuggle instead of paying custom-house duties. For example, the duty on tea imported into Canada is 2½d. currency per lb.; but tea imported into the United States is free; consequently, in every pound-weight coming contraband across the frontier there is so much saved. Thus the statistics of the regular trade cannot present an accurate view of the entire commerce. Latterly, the export-trade from Canada to the States has been rising into importance. Of all things entering into a trade of this kind, the last we should have expected is timber; for of this article it is commonly believed that the States are afflicted with a redundancy. But strange to say, timber is getting scarce in the more settled parts of the Union, and we shall not be surprised to hear of encouragement being given to the planting of trees! Meanwhile, the Canadians are driving a great trade in supplying the produce of the forest to the States, and this in its turn gives corresponding employment to lumberers and saw-mills. If this trade materially increase in England, it may soon affect the prices of Canadian timber. At all events, as matters stand, it is consolatory to think that the Canadian timber-trade is not quite ruined by the reduction of duties on Baltic timber in Great Britain. How true the old saying: 'As one door shuts another opens!'

Canada is rich in mineral resources, and these have lately come into operation. We do not hear of gold being found for the gathering; but the author before us speaks of extensive copper-mining along the shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior, and informs us that the joint-stock associations engaged in this species of enterprise are successful. 'In 1848, 1000 tons of copper were procured from one mine alone.' After referring to the fisheries, Mr Brown goes on to explain that Canada has not been dead to railway enterprise. 'There are at present four lines of railway in the country worked by steam-power. The earliest introduced into Canada was the Champlain and St Lawrence Railway—connecting the navigation of Lake Champlain, at the town of St John, with the south bank of

the St Lawrence, at the village of Laprairie, nearly opposite Montreal. The distance is fourteen miles; and the same company possesses the privileges of the ferry across the river to Montreal—a distance of nine miles—on which they employ two steam-boats. The stock of this company is understood to be one of the best, if not the best, in the colony. The Montreal and Lachine Railway, which was finished about three years ago, is over a distance of nine miles, between the city of Montreal and the village of Lachine, situated towards the upper end of the island of Montreal. . . . The third of the railways in operation in Canada is the St Lawrence and Atlantic Railway, connecting the St Lawrence, a little below Montreal on the opposite shore, with the Atlantic Ocean at the town of Portland, state of Maine. The distance is about 280 miles, of which 130 miles are on the Canada side and 150 on the American. A considerable portion on the Canada side is understood to be now in operation. A continuation of this line from Portland to Halifax is contemplated. In connection with the Atlantic steam-ships landing at Halifax, speedier communication with Europe will thus be effected, both for Canada, and much of the other British-American provinces, and for the United States.' Other railways are contemplated, chiefly in the western part of the province; and there is a universal inclination among proprietors of land to promote this improved kind of communication. It is only in our own country that there has been manifested a disposition to obstruct railway undertakings, and rob the projectors of these great national works.

We pass on to Mr Brown's exposition of the state of crime. The statistics presented on this subject seem to shew that Canada possesses a population much less prone to crime than we can boast of in either England or Scotland. As usual, the bulk of the crime committed may be traced to the agency of intoxicating drinks; yet, cheap as these liquors are in Canada, it is satisfactory to learn that the use of them is 'greatly on the decrease.' A curious fact this, and well deserving the notice of those who imagine that indulgence in drink is in proportion to its accessibility. We are informed that imprisonment for one or more years in a penitentiary is the Canadian method of repressing crime; and it is stated that the district of Huron, with a population of upwards of 20,000, had in a series of six years sent only one inmate to this place of confinement! With all our parade of civilisation, no district of Great Britain could match this fact.

The remarkable paucity of crime which the above and some other statistics would seem to indicate, is doubtless owing in a great degree to the wide scope for personal enterprise in a right direction. In our own old country, much of the misconduct of the criminal class arises from the restrictions under which they labour. Men who would make good backwoodsmen take to poaching and other furtive outlets of an adventurous spirit. The half-idle, dawdling, hopeless existence that many men are doomed to with us must likewise dispose to crime. Canada, with its boundless resources, its scope for all sorts of intractable natures, its room for individual effort untrammelled by refined conventionalities, presents, therefore, opportunities of well-doing of which there is little experience in England. But here comes another important ally of social order. In this comparatively young colony a liberal provision has been made for education. In 1841, the provincial legislature set aside £50,000 currency per annum as a common school fund—a sum considerably greater than is expended on the parish schools of Scotland; and so late as January 1850, 'one million of acres of land have also been set aside for the support of public education.' Elementary schools are everywhere established, and supported partly by these grants and partly by local rates. Their management is in the

hands of district municipalities, and a general inspector, answerable to the governor, aids materially in their establishment and in preserving uniformity of procedure. The number of schools in Upper Canada in 1849 was 2871, and the total amount of annual salaries of teachers was £1,077,713 currency. Canada, as is well known, possesses a population belonging to various religious denominations; and one is naturally curious to know how they come to an agreement on the subject of school instruction. We shall leave Mr Brown to explain how this delicate matter is managed.

Those warring grounds, which mostly in every country are found to throw impediments in the way of almost every conceivable system of popular instruction—the religious scruples of the various sects—are thus disposed of here:—Whenever the inhabitants of any township or parish, professing a religious faith different from that of the majority of the inhabitants, shall dissent from the arrangement of the commissioners, with reference to any school, the dissentients signifying such to the district council, with names of persons elected by them as trustees, such trustees, conforming to the duties of commissioners, are allowed to establish and maintain schools, and to receive a share of the general funds. The value of a provision of this kind is no less liberal than important in a country inhabited, as Canada is, by people from many various countries, and possessing every variety of creed; indeed, it is not possible to expect a system of public instruction to be successfully carried on without liberal concessions to opinions and creeds, provided always that the leading objects and design of education recognised by all be steadily kept in view. Besides the commissioners and trustees for the country, there are, for incorporated towns and cities, from six to fourteen persons appointed by the governor as Boards of Examiners, who shall exercise a check upon the powers of the local incorporations in the election of teachers. These boards consist of an equal number of Catholics and Protestants; and dividing themselves into two departments, one over the schools attended by Catholic children, the other over the Protestant schools, they exercise the privileges of regulating the schools and courses of study in the same manner as the commissioners and trustees do in the country schools.

The means thus described, by which the interests of different religious denominations are preserved, do not appear to differ materially from those adopted by the Committee of Privy-Council on Education, which, in point of fact, will extend pecuniary aid to the schools of any religious body; and as this is exclaimed against as an invasion of principle by a very numerous and powerful party, we are unpleasantly reminded that the munificent policy which educates the entire juvenile population of Upper Canada, could not be applied on a scale of national importance to Great Britain. How distressing to think that the warring pretensions, jealousies, and fears—possibly misunderstandings—of large sections of well-meaning and piously-disposed people, should in effect, as regards elementary instruction, keep this great country behind her own colonies!

With respect to the prospects of agricultural settlers in Upper Canada, the work before us abounds in the most interesting details. Notwithstanding that the winters are severe (though not unpleasant), and that snow suspends field operations for several months, farmers with a fair share of industry and but a moderate capital are almost sure to do well, and to possess, after a few years, a considerable amount of property. Among instances of enterprise being thus rewarded, Mr Brown refers to the case of Mr Ferguson of Woodhill, a gentleman who emigrated from Scotland to Upper Canada in 1833; giving up all the elegances of life in an old country for the chances of the bush. In a pleasant and fertile part of Upper Canada, on the banks of the Grand River, Mr Ferguson purchased

about 8000 acres of land. His village of Ferguson, on the pleasant slope of a branch of that fine stream, 'is now,' says Mr Brown, 'one of the most smiling and prosperous spots of Canada. He has made an independent and comfortable provision for his family; and the extent of his personal influence, and his example, as one of the most enterprising farmers of the colony, unite to make his position, in the eyes of honourable ambition, one highly desirable. How soon might the whole of Canada be changed into one smiling farm, were Mr Ferguson's enterprising example extensively followed by others in his station of society, who are now spending comparatively unprofitable years in the overcrowded avenues of ambition in the parent country! Canada, however, is fast becoming the prosperous and smiling farm anticipated, chiefly without such honourable assistance. The day-labourers, mechanics, and small farmers of England, Scotland, and Ireland, have already accomplished much in performance of such a task in this magnificent colony, and are rewarded by becoming the independent and comfortable proprietors of the lands whose forests their enterprise and industry have so conspicuously and profitably subdued.'

The rapid manner in which populous townships spring into existence is a curious feature of the Canadian wilderness. We are accustomed, in the old country, to see provincial towns in a state of languid existence—just living, and that is all—population almost at a stand; a few tradesmen and shopkeepers struggling to make both ends meet, and so dependent on the neighbouring squirearchy that they dare not utter an independent sentiment; with a horde of unhappy beings still more depressed, decayed labourers, paupers, and nondescripts, whose means of livelihood are a mystery. In such places there is little visible change on the face of property. The same amount of land in tillage; the same number of houses; the same institutions; and from generation to generation the same body of traditional recollections. The most dismal thing in places of this kind, is the hopelessness of situation. There is no scope for enterprise; the cleverest person is bound down to a monotonous routine of petty duties, without any prospect of improving his circumstances. A family is seen to be growing up, but what to do with them is a puzzle. There are no openings for the sons; the daughters are not likely to be married. With what avidity are small appointments sought for—cringed for! How melancholy to see able and intelligent individuals—men up to anything—doomed to throw themselves away in these forlorn, antiquated places, when they might be up and doing, with a wide world before them where to choose! Turning our eyes from this picture of physical and moral decay, how different does everything appear in the United States of America and in Upper Canada, where towns start into life, and become the seats of a busy population within a few years! Forests levelled; lands brought under tillage; new roads opened; fresh institutions got up; on all sides the tokens of a vigorous social economy; and so wide a scope for investment and enterprise, that the difficulty consists in the very choice. Mr Brown presents some striking examples of this progression; and we select that of London, a township situated in the fertile peninsula between Lake Erie and Lake Huron. This township was all a forest, without an inhabitant, until 1817, when two families settled in it. The population 'may now be stated to be about 10,000, possessed of above 100,000 acres of land, of which 20,000 are cultivated. The first regular settlement commenced in 1818 under Mr Talbot, a gentleman from Ireland, accompanied by several of his countrymen, for whom he obtained from government free grants of land and a free passage to Montreal. A son of the founder, writing in 1834, gave this account of the colonists who emigrated to the township of London with his father: "Scarcely an individual

who accompanied Mr Talbot to this country was possessed of more than £100, and many on their arrival in the township had not more than £50; yet of all those persons there is scarcely one that is not now wholly independent, in the possession of fine farms, of abundance of stock, and in the enjoyment of all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life." The town of London, the first house of which was built in 1827, now contains a population of upwards of 5000; and sends a member to the provincial parliament.

A gentleman, at a public meeting in this part of Canada in 1843, took occasion to express sentiments suggested by the prosperous appearance of the settlement; and with these we shall conclude. 'The time is not far distant,' said this acute observer, 'when this country will be better known than it now is—the time is at hand when our people at home will not consider that coming to Canada is coming to the backwoods of a wilderness. They will find, as I have found to my great astonishment, good roads, good modes of conveyance, and as good towns as in Europe, with shops well stored, not only with the necessities but the luxuries of life. They will learn that this town, which now consists of handsome buildings—the one in which we are now assembled, the Mechanics' Institute, giving a stamp of respectability, intelligence, and a taste for the fine arts, of which you may be justly proud—contained but four cottages fourteen years ago. These facts will speak trumpet-tongued, and render this noble country, under British dominion and your unanimity, the noblest appendage to Her Majesty's dominions. It is the natural and the fittest outlet for the superabundant capital, people, and enterprise of the mother-country, presenting as it does an opening for the investment not only of thousands, but of millions of capital, abounding in all the elements of wealth—navigable rivers, a luxuriant soil, and a congenial climate, and undoubted security on real estate at high rates of interest, and to an unlimited extent.'

Is not all this very much like saying to the half-idle sojourners in our old provincial towns: Get thee gone out of the country; cast thyself loose from localities where no good is to be done, and betake thee to lands in which a kind Providence offers to thee a rich inheritance!

THE UGLY GOVERNESS.

'I HAVE a new institutrice, who comes for three hours every day; and do you know, *ma petite tan-tante*, *mamma* says she is so ugly!'

'And do you not think her so, *Lolotte*?'

'O yes, to be sure I do; but *mamma* never allows us to call any one ugly—only when she saw *Mlle Hélie* she forgot, and could not help saying it herself. But although she is so very, very ugly, she is kind and gentle; and you know, *ma tante*, goodness is better than beauty, because *mamma* says goodness will take us to Heaven and beauty won't, though we shall find it there; and all, even *Mlle Hélie*, become as beautiful as angels.'

About a fortnight after this conversation we went to a fête at Versailles. A bright morning broke, and as we were a family party determined upon enjoyment, there was nothing to prevent its being a happy day. The road from Paris there was alive with equestrian, pedestrian, and carriage company, as was the river with boats gliding along, bands of music, and as many gaily-dressed people as could find standing-room on board—all proceeding to the same destination. Every rank was there—the middle and lower, however, predominating; but high or low, all looked unaffectedly happy, and seemed resolved to keep up good-humour and merriment.

We arrived in time to breakfast, that we might have a walk before the waters began to play, and see the

place so interesting to every reader of French memoirs. The town had a deserted, mournful look. Large splendid mansions standing in the neglected gardens, once elaborately laid out and expensively decorated, were tenantless, and had evidently long been so: everything shewed that the fashion of the town had passed by, and that even the bourgeoisie disliked the dulness too truly to profit by the magnificent houses which they might have occupied for a very small rent. It was with strange feelings we gazed at that splendid palace, and recalled the luxury, the prodigality, the gallantry, the taste, the talent, the grace that had formerly rendered it and all connected with it so famous; and felt that it was all over—all gone, and the remembrance remaining but to

'Point a moral and adorn a tale;'

for even most of the names once so celebrated have disappeared entirely, or are at least only surviving in poverty and obscurity, far from the scene of their former triumph. We retraced its history from the commencement on to that sad night when poor Marie Antoinette was driven from her warm bed never more to return, and on through the Reign of Terror till the present time: our steps echoed in the now still courts where once there had been such perpetual clatter and bustle; all the bustlers, and petitioners, and intriguers in the grave, and as much forgotten as the petty intrigues that had occupied their frivolous minds. Versailles was now the property of the nation, of the people it had trampled on and despised. Much did we moralise, and very melancholy did our moralising make us, until some one remarking that if we did not make haste we should not get good places to see the waters play, we quickened our pace, recovered our spirits, and in a few minutes added another group to the many assembled in expectation of what is certainly well worth beholding once.

We waited a considerable time; and to make it pass more pleasantly, I entertained myself by scrutinising the various little parties immediately in our vicinity, busying myself with conjecturing who they were, whence they came, and in short composing little domestic histories for each and all in my imagination. Nearly opposite to us were seated as it appeared three old ladies, an old gentleman, a young man, and a girl. Two of the ladies bore the impress of former beauty, the other was plain; but the young girl was lively and lovely; and I soon could perceive that the youth was evidently more ardent in his attentions and admiration than the most affectionate brother. I therefore sagaciously set him down for a lover of the little lady's, and such, in fact, he proved to be. The third elderly female, I also perceived, upon a more attentive inspection, was, after all, not old, only most particularly plain—large, lumpy features, unshaded by her hair, which was braided or brushed so far back that at first sight she did not appear to have any; and very small, black, bead-like eyes did not certainly set off to much advantage a great expanse of muddy white face, which was neither hidden nor helped by the small straw-bonnet of the form then fashionable. There was no expression to redeem these homely features: she neither looked good-natured nor ill-natured, intelligent nor stupid, while her tall, angular, thin, high-shouldered, square, ungainly figure, contrasted most forcibly and unfavourably with the plump, gracefully-turned little form of '*ma cousine Clélie*,' as I heard her name the little beauty; the more so as they both wore the same dress, cut after the same fashion. Clélie, to be sure, had added a few flowers to her bonnet, and a brooch, bracelet, and watch; but saving these slight differences, both dresses were alike—only they hung so differently upon the two!

'That is *Mlle Hélie*,' whispered *Lolotte*; and I assuredly no longer wondered at *maman* having

forgotten herself so far as to call the poor *institutrice* ugly: she was, I thought, perfectly frightful. A respectable-looking woman whom I had observed conversing with M^{lle} Hélie seated herself beside me shortly after, and I, as is usual in France, soon scraped acquaintance with her, and led the way I wished her to follow—namely, to the Hélies and their history.

'They were once,' said she, 'very well off, but are now so nearly destitute, that, were it not for Henriette, who goes out teaching, I don't know how they could manage to live. Ah, what a pity she is so plain! for her heart is as good as an angel's, and she is as clever as a *membre de l'Académie*. She rises early, gives her parents their breakfast, and cleans out their room: she then sets out upon her pilgrimage, and never returns until late at night, when she dines or supe; after which she has much to do to prepare for the next day's lessons, and to put her poor wardrobe in order. She will wear herself to death, but that she says she does not mind, so that she only lives long enough to lay her parents in the grave. There,' pointing to Clélie and her mother, 'are her aunt and cousin, the Clairvilles. They have a much better income, and might indeed be very comfortable did Clélie spend less on her dress; but her mother spoils her so: *enfin*, it don't much signify. M. Mervale is rich, and has proposed; and if they can only push on the marriage before the love-fit is burnt out and he begins to see clearly, she will be a much more fortunate girl than she deserves to be.'

Clélie was, I must admit, very pretty, although beyond eyes, teeth, and hair, none of her features were quite faultless—her little nose was not very classically formed, and her mouth was positively wide; but pretty every one felt her to be, and M. Mervale above all seemed under the influence of an enchantment: he looked at no other person, listened to no other voice; while she, completely secure, as she thought, of her conquest, gave herself very little trouble to attend to him, and kept staring in a coquetish manner about her, as if she wished to attract the notice of others. Poor M. de Mervale sighed, and gazed, and turned away one minute, as if lost in thought, and then roused himself up again to watch the motions of the frivolous, but too fascinating little flutterer. Presently a group of gay young men came and stood near us, all in high spirits, laughing, jostling, whispering, and quizzing. M^{lle} Clélie was evidently the subject of their remarks, but I could only hear a word here and there. 'C'est l'épouseur?' 'Il en a bien l'air.' 'Pauvre diable!' 'Mais.' Then the grim cousin was likened to a box of carpenter's tools all angles. 'But,' said one, 'were my evil genius to force me to make either my wife, I would rather risk my future with *la laide*.'

In the evening we encountered the group again, Clélie dancing with one of the party of young men I had remarked in the morning, whom all his companions now seemed agreed in calling 'Marquis,' although before I often heard them address him, and invariably name him Hyppolite. One of the old ladies looked on approvingly, but the Hélies seemed vexed, and poor M. Mervale in a pitiable state. M^{lle} Hélie was, as it appeared, exerting herself to comfort him, and take off his attention, but he paid little heed to her observations.

'Silly, silly girl! you are throwing away your happiness and your future prospects; and it is plain these young men are either encouraging your folly, to open M. Mervale's eyes, or to amuse themselves for the passing hour, careless of the misery they may occasion'—were my reflections as I looked at Clélie, who was rolling about her pretty eyes à la Française, thinking herself the admired of all observers, as well as of M. Mervale. But the evening drew in, and I was prevented from moralising any more, as we returned home, leaving M^{lle} Clairville in the midst of a polka with Hyppolite, displaying ten thousand airs and graces,

and plainly shewing to all lookers-on her admiration of him whom she evidently never doubted was her noble partner and admiring lover. But although this attracted my attention at the time, I very soon forgot all about it, even though I pursued my acquaintance with M^{lle} Mauviette, the lady who had related to me the history of the Hélies and Clairvilles, inasmuch as madame herself was a character worth studying. This good dame, with a husband, two children, and a very moderate income, chose to be considered at one and the same time an economist and a woman of fashion and refinement; and if you took her from her own representation, she was either of these characters according to the way in which she chose you to consider her. She loved show, could not live without excitement or amusement, but knew that if some of her husband's relations thought her extravagant, she would lose their help towards enabling her to make the figure she wished to assume in the eyes of others; and the clash of the two necessities was most amusing, and must have cost her a world of trouble. She boasted that she kept but one servant, and denounced the extravagance of her sister-in-law, who, with the same family and no more fortune, had two; forgetting all the while that these two did all that was required, needlework included, while M^{lle} Mauviette's dashing Lucile—what with her high wages, washing, wine, coffee and sugar à discretion, presents and perquisites—took from her as much as the other lady divided between her cook and unpretending housemaid. M^{lle} Mauviette also said nothing of the *femme de journée* she had for three or four days every week; nor of the sewing-girl she employed for five of six every month; nor of the man who came every Wednesday to wax and brush her floors. She received every Thursday *en cérémonie*: had friends in the morning, friends at dinner, friends in the evening; and the remaining six days were occupied in returning the visits she that Thursday received. And yet she said she lived quite out of the world, in privation and solitude, saw none but intimate friends, and went to no parties—that is, none where diamonds and continual new dresses were indispensable, for these were beyond her powers; and to hear her complain you would imagine that they alone were what was worth living for. With such a person the Hélies and Clairvilles when out of sight were out of mind: they could be of no use, except when they furnished conversation by accident, as they had happened to do at Versailles. A year nearly therefore elapsed without my ever once thinking of Clélie and her coquetries, when my niece Lolotte ran in one morning breathless, her rosy face radiant with satisfaction.

'Do you know, *ma tante*, that M^{lle} Hélie is going to be married? She herself told mamma, who at first thought she must be raving, but 'tis quite true: upon the 16th she will be Madame Mervale! Everybody is so surprised, and all as glad; for you know she is so good and so poor, and *le futur* so rich and good-natured. I alone am sorry, for I must have a new governess, and she may perhaps be cross—at any rate I am sure I can never love her so well as M^{lle} Hélie.'

The news was quite true. Clélie, thinking she had made a noble conquest, behaved so very foolishly, that M. Mervale's eyes at last opened, and, as a necessary consequence, his heart shut. He now saw her the frivolous being she in fact always was; and taking advantage of her willingness to give up an engagement he at last perceived could bring him nothing but misery, the affair was broken off to the infinite relief of both; for Clélie thought she was secure of the 'marquis'—so little did she or her weak mother know of the world. This was not all: the virtues, sweet temper, high principle, and good sense of her cousin had long been known to M. Mervale; and now he had in some degree become accustomed to her extreme plainness, he asked himself why, as he had made up his mind to marry, he should not marry her? Her surprise was great when he pro-

posed, and his still greater when she refused him. She 'could not and would not leave her poor old parents,' she said: so after thinking the matter over, her present conduct only raised her higher in his esteem, and he consented, nay, insisted upon the old couple occupying rooms in his house. The whole town talked of course, and every one rejoiced except Clélie; for her new lover—who turned out to be a silk-mercer, not a marquis—after dancing attendance for a few weeks, danced off and married another lady.

About a year after these events, I was one hot day sitting under the trees near Ranelagh, and eating an ice, while watching the gay Parisians going to the Thursday's ball there, when my niece whispered: 'Do you see that *bonne* in a Norman cap sitting on the grass there with a baby?'

'Yes.'

'Well, that is Madame Mervale's baby, and I am looking to see her come for it; she went to take a drive farther in the *bois*.'

The baby in question was a fine healthy boy; and while we were playing with and caressing it, the carriage stopped, and a lady alighted. At first sight I could scarcely believe it was the *ci-devant* Mlle Henriette Hélie, so much was she altered for the better. Her skin, although pale, was now clear; her teeth—thanks to Georges Fattet, that capital dentist—good, white, and even; her huge bones were covered; curls softened her large features; and the smile of affection and newly-awakened domestic feelings lightened and gave expression to her former impassive countenance. She was richly, tastefully, and fashionably dressed, by the joint exertions of a first-rate *modiste* and her *femme-de-chambre*; and the knowledge that she now filled a certain position gave her motions and manners more ease, and consequently more grace. I am told she and her husband are perfectly happy, and that *la cousine* Clélie is still unmarried and still unwise.

CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME.

'The time draws near the birth of Christ;

The moon is hid, the night is still;

The Christmas bells from hill to hill

Answer each other in the mist.'

'Who made Christmas?' was a question that arose last year in a Christmas party. The querist, with legitimate curiosity, looked round for a reply; but for a time no one spoke. At length some said one thing, some another, yet far short of what was required to constitute a satisfactory reply: every one was surprised to find how little was really known on a subject which promised to be interesting; and ultimately it was arranged that one of the party should prepare what learned folk call a 'paper' which should answer the question, and be read at their next meeting—in the present year 1851.

Following this paper, we proceed to state that festivities at the close of the year are of much older date than Christianity. The use of evergreens, and the veneration for the mistletoe, are traceable in the history of ancient nations, both of the south and north of Europe; and the Roman Saturnalia are known to every classical student. 'It was,' we are told, 'towards the close of December that all the town was in an unusual motion, and the children everywhere invoking Saturn; nothing now to be seen but tables spread out for feasting, and nothing heard but shouts of merriment; all business was dismissed, and none at work but cooks and confectioners; no account of expenses was to be kept, and it appears that one-tenth part of a man's income was to be appropriated to this jollity. All exertion of body and mind was forbidden, except for the purpose of recreation; nothing to be read or recited which did not provoke mirth, adapted

to the season and the place. The slaves were allowed the utmost freedom of railery and truth with their masters; sitting with them at table, dressed in their clothes, playing all sorts of tricks, and telling them of their faults to their faces, while they smutted them. No one was allowed to be angry, and he who was played on, if he loved his own comfort, would be the first to laugh.' This licentious folly—*libertas Decembris*—lasted for a week, during which the holly branches were sent round on their friendly errand.

The early Christians seem to have very soon begun to celebrate the day of the Nativity at the time of the Saturnalia; probably finding it the most convenient season for the purpose, and perhaps seeking to turn an old-established custom to a superior use. It appears that in the first century Clement said: 'Brethren, keep diligently feast-days, and truly in the first place the day of Christ's birth;' and in the following century it was further ordained, 'that in the holy night of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour, they do celebrate public church-services, and in them solemnly sing the Angel's Hymn, because also the same night He was declared unto the shepherds by an angel, as the truth itself doth witness.' Worshippers were enjoined to eschew rigidly the spirit of paganism; but in spite of the endeavours to impart a serious tone to the festival, it continued to be chiefly a scene of noisy revelry.

After the Saxons and Danes came the Normans, bringing with them additions and variations of the Christmas observances, in the rudiments of mysteries and miracle-plays, and of mummeries, maskings, and pageants. These last were first exhibited in the reign of Henry II., and kept up by his Lion-hearted successor, as appears in the old romance:

'Christmas is a time full honest;

Kyng Richard is honoured with gret feste,

All his clerks and barouns

Were set in their parylouns,

And served with gret plenté

Of mete and drink, and each dainté.'

From the custom of singing masses on the eve of the Nativity we derive the name of Christmas, or Christmas, for the sacred festival; and from the permission accorded to servants and poor people to go round with their boxes and collect money to pay for the masses recited by the priests for their deceased or distant friends we get our term—and its attendant practice—Christmas-box, one so much abused that its entire disuse is greatly to be desired. But to return to the miracle-plays: they speedily grew into favour, and were made use of by the clergy as a means of diverting the minds of the people from some of the gross habits endeared to them by long custom. But if any good impressions were made, they were soon effaced by the licence of the Christmas mummeries, at which so much power was given to the Lord of Misrule. The English in general were so strongly attached to their customary pastimes, that when at the siege of Orleans, the lords 'requested of the French commanders that they might have a night of minstrelsy, with trumpets and clarions;' which request, the chronicler tells us, 'was granted, and the horrors of war were suspended by melodies that were felt to be delightful.' It was a strange celebration of peace amid the terrors of war.

Christmas proceedings gradually became so riotous, that Henry VIII. passed several statutes, charging all serving-men and journeymen artificers not to play their games except in the Christmas holidays, and then only on their masters' premises. At times, during this reign, there was competition between the king and his minister Wolsey, as to who should celebrate Christmas in the most stately manner. On one occasion when, on account of a great mortality in London, the monarch kept himself quiet at Eltham, the car-

dinal 'laye at the manor of Richemond, and there kept open householde, to lordes, ladies, and all other that would come, with plaies and disguisung in most royall manner.' The king, however, made up for his abstinence in subsequent years, and lavished enormous sums on Christmas festivities.

We who are accustomed to associate gravity with law, find it difficult to believe in the pranks and buffooneries which the gentlemen of the Inns of Court began to indulge in about this time, by way of celebrating Christmas. 'They held for that season everything in mockery: they had a mock parliament, a Prince of *Sophie* or Wisdom, an honourable order of Pegasus, a high constable, marshal, a master of the game, a ranger of the forest, lieutenant of the Tower, which was a temporary prison for Christmas delinquents—all the paraphernalia of a court. During the games a huntsman came into the hall with nine or ten couple of hounds, bearing on the end of his staff a purse-net which held a fox and a cat; these were let loose and hunted by the hounds, and killed beneath the fire.' All of this, and much more of the same sort, was but the prelude to the feasting, when roast and boiled smoked on the table, and wine and ale went round in copious draughts, and pastime ended in debauchery. Evelyn says in his *Diary*: 'I went to see the revells at the Middle Temple, which is an old, but riotous custom, and has no relation to virtue or policy'—a proof how little decorum, to say nothing of religion, pervaded the celebration of Christmas by the long robe. The *High Jinks* of the Scottish bar in a later time were refinement in comparison.

Great power was always delegated to the Lord of Misrule—or, as we should say, the Master of the Ceremonies—for the time being. At the Christmas holidays in 1634 the Right Worshipful Richard Evelyn, Esq.—father of the author of the *Diary*—High Sheriff and Deputy-Lieutenant of Surrey and Sussex, drew up 'articles' regulating the functions and appointment of a Lord of Misrule over his estate at Wotton. 'Imprimis,' he writes, 'I give free leave to Owen Flood, my trumpeter, gent., to be Lord of Misrule of all good orders during the twelve days. And also I give free leave to the said Owen Flood to command all and every person or persons whatsoever, as well servants as others, to be at his command whensoever he shall sound his trumpet or music, and to do him good service as though I were present myself, at their perils.' Then after requiring that all persons shall assemble at prayers in the morning, and imposing fines for swearing, he proceeds: 'If any man shall come into the hall, and sit at dinner or supper more than once, he shall endure punishment at his lordship's pleasure.

'If any man shall be drunk, or drink more than is fit, or offer to sleep during the time abovesaid, or do not drink up his bowl of beer, but flings away his snuff—that is to say, the seconde draught—he shall drink two, and afterwards be excluded.'

No one was to be allowed to enter the kitchen to annoy the cook; and 'if any man shall kiss any maid, widow, or wife, except to bid welcome or farewell, without his lordship's consent, he shall have punishment as his lordship shall think convenient.'

And last: 'I give full power and authority to his lordship to break up all locks, bolts, bars, doors, and latches, and to fling up all doors out of hinges to come at those who presume to disobey his lordship's commands.—God save the king!'

Such liberty being permitted in a well-regulated household, we may easily imagine that in others but little restraint would be exercised; and so attractive were the revels to country gentlemen, that many of them passed their Christmas in London for the purpose of attending them; but in 1589 they received orders to depart forthwith to their respective counties, and thereby maintain the ancient customs which had fallen

into disuse, and encourage the poor by their hospitality. Old Tusser's quatrain prescribed their duties—

'At Christmas be mery, and thanke God of all:
And feast thy poore neighbours, the great with the small.
Yea al the yere long have an eie to the poore:
And God shall sende luck, to kepe open thy doore.'

But when the Commonwealth came, Christmas festivities and holidays were forbidden as irreverent and pernicious: conscientious people, among whom Bunyan is mentioned, scrupled to eat mince-pies because of the superstitious character popularly attached to them. To many the enforcement of the scruples was a sore grievance. One writer thus laments:—

'Gone are those golden days of yore,
When Christmas was a high day:
Whose sports we now shall see no more;
'Tis turned into Good-Friday.'

Later in the same century a chaplain on board one of the ships of war describes the manner in which the holiday was observed at sea: 'Crismas day,' he writes in his diary, 'we keepe thus: at 4 in the morning our trumpeters all doe flatt their trumpetts, and begin at our captain's cabin, and thence to all the officers' and gentlemen's cabins; playing a levite at each cabin door, and bidding a good-morrow, wishing a merry Crismas. After they goe to their station—namely, on the poepe, and sound three levitts in honour of the morning. At 10 wee goe to prayers and sermon; text, Zech. ix. 9. Our captaine had all his officers and gentlemen to dinner with him, where wee had excellent good fayre: a ribb of beife, plum-puddings, minc-pyes, &c. and plenty of good wines of severall sorts; dranke healths to the king, to our wives and friends, and ended the day with much civill myrth.'

The singing of carols dates from the very earliest period of Christmas celebration, when songs of gladness were considered as appropriate to the occasion. The song of the angels was among the first set to music:—

'When Christ was born of Mary free,
In Bethlem, in that fayre cyte,
Angells songen with mirth and glee,
In excelsis gloria.'

This subject was one of the most popular, as is indicated by the great number of carols of which it forms the theme: such as—

'Sweet Jhesus is cum to us
This good tym of Crystmas;
Wherfor with prayes syng we always,
Welcum our Messyas.'

And another beginning

'Of M.A.R.I. syng I wyll a new song.'

Or

'Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!
To Mary thus spake Gabriell.'

Nowell, or with the French Noël, the name by which Christmas is known in France, was a cry expressive of great satisfaction or joy, and is supposed to be a contraction of *Emanuel*—God with us. Among the carols formerly sung in that country there is one of curious character, which is said to have been chanted to a 'merry tune.' The first verse runs—

'Quand Dieu naquit à Noël
Dedans la Judée,
On vit ce jour solemnel
La joie inondée;
Il n'étoit ni petit ni grand
Qui n'apportât son présent,
Et n'o, n'o, n'o, n'o,
Et n'offrit, frit, frit,
Et n'o, n'o, et n'offrit,
Et n'offrit sans cesse Toute sa richesse.'

Sometimes every member of the festive party was expected to sing a carol, or to pay a fine in case of failure—the fine being rigidly enforced: a practical exemplification of *No Song, no Supper*; in other instances the caroling was performed by a single voice. As Southey writes—

'In his lord's castle dwelt, for many a year,
A well-beloved servant: he could sing
Carols for Shrovetide, or for Candlemas,
Songs for the wassel, and when the boar's head
Crowned with gay garlands, and with rosemary,
Smoked on the Christmas board.'

Old writers seem never to have tired of praising hospitality. One who wrote more than two centuries ago shews how much power of happiness lay in the hands of a generous householder: 'Suppose Christmas now approaching, the evergreen ivy trimming and adorning the portals and porticoes of so frequented a building; the usual carolls to observe antiquitie, cheerfully sounding; and that which is the complement of his inferior comforts—his neighbours, whom he tenders as members of his own family, joyne with him in this consort of mirth and melody'—then we may presume he had won their respect and gratitude for at least another year. Old George Wither sings with gladsome spirit—

'Now all our neighbours' chimneys smoke,
And Christmas blocks are burning;
Their ovens they with baked meat choke,
And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lye;
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury 't in a Christmas pie,
And evermore be merry.'

What the Christmas pie was may be understood from the description of one published in a Newcastle paper at the beginning of January 1770. 'Monday last was brought from Howick to Berwick, to be shipped for London, for Sir Hen. Grey, Bart., a pie, the contents whereof are as follow—namely, 2 bushels of flour, 20 lbs. of butter, 4 geese, 2 turkeys, 2 rabbits, 4 wild ducks, 2 woodcocks, 6 snipes, and 4 partridges; 2 neats' tongues, 2 curlews, 7 blackbirds, and 6 pigeons: it is supposed a very great curiosity; was made by Mrs Dorothy Patterson, housekeeper at Howick. It was near nine feet in circumference at bottom, weighs about twelve stones, will take two men to present it to table. It is neatly fitted with a case, and four small wheels to facilitate its use to every guest that inclines to partake of its contents at table.'

But times have changed. There is but little noisy jollity in Christmas as at present celebrated: people go no longer to see the Glastonbury thorn blow on the 25th of December, either Old or New Style; nor visit cattle-lairs at midnight of Christmas-Eve, to see the oxen fall on their knees, as they are said to have done at the time of the Nativity in the stable at Bethlehem—a superstition which one would hardly expect to find reproduced in Canada, where an Indian was detected stealing out 'to see the deer kneel;' for, as he replied to his questioner, 'It was Christmas night, when all the deer fall upon their knees to the Great Spirit, and look up.' Neither do they consider that the multiplied ingredients of mince-pies are symbolical of the various offerings brought by the Wise men; or that it is necessary to make them of a long and narrow shape to represent a manger; or that eating them is a proof of orthodoxy; or that for each variety of pie so eaten so many happy days are in store for the eater. Neither do they believe that the weather of the twelve days of Christmas is prognosticative of that of the twelve months in the following year; nor drink speed ale, or eat roasted apples before breakfast; nor wassail the trees, that they may bear

'Fall many a plum, and many a pear,'

as Herrick says: neither is the singing of carols so well honoured in the observance as formerly.

For our parts, we should be glad to see a revival of carol-singing—that is, in a properly decorous spirit. There is something solemn and touching even now in listening to the chant of the street-minstrels—the *waits*—as it rises through the silence of the night, making one feel that peace and goodwill may become something more than sound. And so, with a passage from Shakespeare which embodies a few bygone superstitions, we conclude our illustrations of Christmas in the Olden Time:

'Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time.'

THE UNDER-SEA TELEGRAPH.

We have of late been so much accustomed to great achievements in science and art, that the establishment of a telegraphic communication across the Channel is regarded almost as a matter of course, calling for no very special remark. But to be placed *en rapport* with the continent, while preserving the integrity of our insular position, is a triumph of ingenuity on which a little attention may be worthily bestowed; and we propose to trace a brief outline of the leading features of its history.

It will be remembered that the first attempt was made in August 1850, when a copper-wire, twenty-five miles in length, coated with gutta-percha, and weighted with leaden clamps, was sunk in the Channel from Dover to Cape Gris-nez on the French coast. During the process of sinking from the deck of the *Goliath* steamer, and after the whole line was laid, the transmission of electro-galvanic signals demonstrated the perfect feasibility and success of the undertaking. The wire, however, had been laid but a few days when it was broken by chafing against the rocks on the shore, or some other equally fatal accident; and the communication being thus suddenly broken off, we were still dependent on the usual modes of forwarding intelligence—the mail-boats and the clipper steamer kept for very special occasions, which inquisitive travellers may have seen lying trimly equipped in Calais Harbour.

It was not likely that so important an enterprise would be lightly abandoned. The Submarine Telegraph Company was formed; and in July last, Mr Crampton undertook to supply an efficient telegraphic communication by the end of September, and in accordance with the conditions imposed by the French and English governments. The plans were carried into execution at the company's works at Wapping; first, by twisting together, by the aid of powerful steam machinery, four copper-wires coated with gutta-percha, and twenty-four miles in length. This core, as it may be called, was next thickly covered with hempen strands twisted spirally, and thoroughly saturated with a preparation of pitch and tallow, and these in turn were 'served' with similarly-prepared strands passing transversely round them. The core, on which everything depends, was thus protected by a double covering closely compressed, and the whole was then enveloped with ten strands of galvanised iron-wire, each about a quarter-inch thick, twisting round and perfectly enclosing it, the object being to prevent the action of the sea-water upon the interior. When finished, the cable presented a remarkably bright and polished appearance from the effects of the galvanising. Its construction occupied three weeks, and the total weight—sufficient to find its way to the bottom without additional loading—was said to be 200 tons. As the

huge mass lay coiled up on the wharf previous to shipment, the integrity of the core was tested by sending an electric spark, and firing a fuse, through the whole length of twenty-four miles.

By the 24th September the cable was safely coiled in the hold of the *Blazer*, a steamer placed at the service of the company by government, and towed down to the South Foreland—the point of communication for the English side. Here one end of the cable was landed, and hauled up the beach some distance beyond high-water-mark to a spot near the lighthouse, where a shaft, pierced perpendicularly from the top of the cliff, receives the wires which are connected with the telegraph at Dover. The necessary attachments having been made, the *Blazer*, towed by two steam-tugs, started for the opposite shore, notwithstanding the blustering weather; for, according to the terms of agreement with the French government, the cable was to be sunk into its place by the 1st of October. The point selected for communication on the French side was Sangatte, a small village standing on the dreary dunes between three and four miles from Calais, said to have been the spot whence Caesar embarked for the invasion of Britain. The beach at that part of the coast is a fine smooth sand, eminently favourable for the proposed object, and distant from the Foreland twenty-one miles.

The *Fearless* steamer started a little in advance of the *Blazer*, to shew the route to be followed. As the latter went onwards the cable was slowly uncoiled, and after passing through a series of brakes, intended to prevent too rapid a movement, it was 'payed out' over the stern. Owing to an accident which tore away about eighteen yards of one of the outer wires, the speed was reduced from five to two knots an hour; and when six miles were laid down in this way, an attempt was made to transmit a signal to the party on shore; and after some delay, arising from the telegraphic instrument not having been attached, it succeeded perfectly. This was encouraging, and all promised well for a successful termination, when the tow-ropes unfortunately broke, and the *Blazer* drifted a mile and a half out of her course before the accident could be repaired. She arrived, however, off Sangatte about six in the evening of the 25th, having occupied ten hours in the passage across; and the weather being stormy, she anchored for the night two miles from the shore. The next day a gale blew from the west, interfering seriously with the prosecution of the work; but the *Blazer* was towed to within a mile of the French coast, and the remainder of the cable cast overboard there, with a buoy attached to mark its position, and all the vessels returned to the British side. The gale was still blowing on Saturday the 26th, when Captain Bullock went with the *Fearless*, and carried the end of the cable some hundred yards nearer the shore. On the 27th the weather moderated. 'Accordingly,' to quote from the *Times*, 'the engineers and managers of the Gutta-Percha Company took on board the *Fearless* a large coil of gutta-percha roping, and after hauling up the end of the telegraph-cable, the first wires were carefully attached, and at half-past five in the afternoon a boat landed them on the beach at Sangatte. The moment chosen for landing was low-water, and the coil of gutta-percha ropes was immediately buried in the beach by a gang of men in attendance, up to low-water-mark, and even a short distance beyond it. Thence to where the cable was moored did not much exceed a quarter of a mile.

'The telegraphs were instantly attached to the submarine wires, and all the instruments responded to the batteries from the opposite shores. At six o'clock messages were printed at Sangatte from the South Foreland, specimens of which Captain Bullock took over to Dover the same evening for the Queen and the Duke of Wellington.

'On Monday morning the wires at Sangatte were joined to those already laid down to Calais, and two of the instruments used by the French government having been sent to the South Foreland, Paris was placed in immediate communication with the English court.'

It is intended to replace the wires now carried across the Sangatte beach by an additional length of cable which will be spliced on to the main portion, and thus make it of equal strength and durability throughout. The possibility of electro-telegraphic communication was, however, once more demonstrated, and shortly afterwards the company announced themselves ready to transmit messages in either direction across the Channel. By that time, Nov. 13, the communication between the Foreland and the offices at Dover was completed, and instruments by Cooke and Wheatstone, and Brett and Henley, were ready for work. 'After some little delay,' to quote again from the *Times*, 'consequent on the rapidity with which the arrangements were made, the wires were finally connected, and it became a moment of intense anxiety when signals were about to be passed. The instrument was set in motion, signals were interchanged with Calais, and the complete success of the undertaking was manifest. Very few communications had passed when a mounted messenger arrived with a dispatch from the telegraph office of the South-Eastern Railway Company. It proved to be a message containing the prices of the funds on the London Exchange, which were to be immediately sent on by the submarine telegraph to Paris. From this time dispatches were continually passing between the Dover telegraph offices and London and Paris. A message from London was sent to Paris, and an answer received and forwarded to London, within one hour, in which time is included the journey of a mile from the station to the office and back again, and to this must be added the loss of time consequent on the message having to be sent from the Paris office to the Paris Bourse, and for the return of the reply.

'It was a happy coincidence that the day chosen for the opening of the telegraph was that on which the Duke of Wellington attended in person to close the Harbour Sessions; and it was resolved by the promoters that His Grace on leaving Dover by the two o'clock train for London should be saluted by a gun fired by the transmission of a current from Calais. It was arranged with Calais that as the clock struck two, a signal was immediately to be passed, and, punctual to the moment, a loud report reverberated on the water, and shook the ground with some force. It was then ascertained that a thirty-two pounder, loaded with ten pounds of powder, had been fired by the current. The report had scarcely ceased ere it was taken up from the heights, the military, as usual, saluting the departure of the Duke with a round of artillery. Guns were then fired successively on both coasts, Calais firing the gun at Dover, and Dover returning the compliment to Calais.'

Thursday the 13th November may thus be considered as a memorable day. Henceforward winds may blow, and billows roll, and delay the mails as long as they will; but while the surface of the sea is agitated, the swift intelligence will be flying along the metallic wires lying undisturbed at the bottom. The social and political advantages to grow out of instantaneous communication with all parts of the continent are as yet only foreseen, and to be judged of by the result. Hitherto the prices of public funds have been the principal subjects of transmission. The *Times*, referring to the Thursday in question, stated—'The one o'clock opening prices at the Paris Bourse to-day were received through the submarine telegraph, and posted in the Stock Exchange, by Mr T. Uzielli, at twenty minutes to three. The two o'clock prices were also received before the close of business, and during the afternoon a transaction of some amount was effected in Russian stock in consequence of an order transmitted in the

same manner.' Again, on Friday 14th, there appeared in the same paper a brief sentence, headed: 'BY SUBMARINE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH—Paris, Thursday, 7 o'clock P.M.—The Assembly has rejected the Electoral law by a majority of 355 against 348:' a striking illustration of what may be done in the transmission of news. Since then messages have been repeatedly sent from Liverpool as well as London to France, Italy, and Germany, 'and in one instance a communication was forwarded to Cracow, to be despatched thence by mail to Odessa.' Ordinary modes of communication will now be greatly in arrears, seeing that we can get the pith of all that is desirable to be known from any quarter at a few minutes' notice and at any hour—from Marseilles, Venice, St Petersburg, Pesth, Prague, or Vienna. Governments will now be able to talk to one another without long official delays, and save something in ambassadors. It will be necessary, however, to have some universal language which all may understand without the necessity of translation, and to extend over the whole of Europe the telegraphic union which has been formed for part of Germany.

Mr Wheatstone first conceived the possibility of an under-sea telegraph in 1837, and had half a mile of wire covered with an insulating envelope prepared for the experiment; but not being used, this wire was afterwards employed for some of the earliest telegraphic trials on the Birmingham Railway. In 1840, Mr Wheatstone demonstrated the possibility by plans and drawings to the governments of France, England, and Belgium, and measures were taken for a practical application of the principle, but without pushing them to a conclusion, as the authorities were too much engaged with other matters. Not so the present endeavour: its success is no longer a question; and in time, as the rhymist says, the electric impulse will be speeding

'Over—under—lands or seas,
To the far antipodes.
Now o'er cities thronged with men,
Forest now or lonely glen;
Now where busy Commerce broods,
Now in wildest solitudes;
Now where Christian temples stand,
Now afar in pagan land.
Here again as soon as gone,
Making all the earth as one,
Moscow speaks at twelve o'clock,
London reads ere noon the shock;
Seems it not a feat sublime,
Intellect hath conquered Time !'

THE BLIND FIDDLER.

ONE diamally foggy and rainy afternoon in November last, when the streets, clothed in a viscid garment of thick and slippery mud, were passable only at a snail's pace, because every step forward sent you half a step back again—when no one whom fate, or equally inexorable business, did not drive forth, ventured to brave the misty atmosphere fraught with catarrh and influenza—I heard the sound of a fiddle outside my window. The strain was a melancholy attempt at a Scotch reel; and the incongruity of the spectacle it conjured up to my imagination compared with the actual scene before my eyes had just awaked me to the perception of the comic, when the music ceased on a sudden in the middle of the second stave, and I heard the sound of a fall; and a faint ejaculation, half-sigh, half-groan, which immediately followed, brought me to the door to see what was the matter.

It was already getting dark, independently of the fog, and I could but dimly discern a dusky mass lying by the garden gate; but I could hear the plaintive moans that proceeded from it, and soon, with the help of

Betty, whom I had summoned to my assistance, got the wretched bundle of humanity into a chair in front of the glowing kitchen fire. A few spoonfuls of diluted brandy soon brought life and animation into a weather-beaten face, and produced from livid lips the eager, almost savage request: 'For God's sake, give me a bit of vittles !'

'When did you eat last ?'

'Not since yesterday morning. I had a bit of bread yesterday morning.'

'Oh !' said Betty, 'aint that horrid, and he a blind man—as blind as a stone ?' Giving the necessary directions, I left Betty to manage her blind patient in her own way, and in about an hour afterwards went down to see what improvement she had effected.

The poor fellow, having satisfied the demands of nature, and supplied his own wants, had immediately began to attend to those of his inseparable companion—his cracked, patched, and dilapidated fiddle. I found him airing it tenderly before the fire; then, having borrowed a cloth from Betty, he employed himself in cleansing the crazy instrument from the moist breath of the fog, and from the contaminations it had picked up through his fall. This accomplished, he began feeling it all over as cautiously as a surgeon does the body of a patient in search of a fracture. Fortunately there was no serious mischief done, and the poor fellow laughed cheerfully when he discovered that the only friend he had in the world had escaped unhurt.

'Well, my man,' said I, 'how do you get on? Not hungry now, I hope ?'

'Bless 'ee, sir, no ! I'm righter than a trivet now, sir. I ha'nt had sich a feed I can't tell 'ee when, sir. I'm very much obleeged to you, sir, surely. I wor altogether done up, and that's a fact.'

'Well, then, perhaps you have no objection to return the favour we have done you by telling me how you came to be a blind fiddler, what you get by it, how you manage to live, and all about it !'

'Not a bit of objection in the world, sir, if you likes to hear it. There aint much fun in what I got to tell though, cos I ha'nt had much luck in my time: but if you wish to hear it, of course you shall, and I'll begin at the beginning. I'm quite agreeable, sir.'

With that, laying his fiddle to rest in an old black bag which he drew from the crown of a crushed hat, and settling his arms on the elbows of the chair, so as to rest his whole frame in a state of unaccustomed luxury, he delivered himself literally, with the exception of certain circumlocutions which I have thought fit to digest into something like order and consecutiveness, pretty much to the following effect:—

'I aint but a youngish man, sir, though they do tell me that I looks a reg'lar old fie. What might you suppose my age, sir ?'

'From forty-eight to fifty, or thereabouts.'

'There 'tis agin. Everybody says I'm fifty, when I'm not forty yet. I was born in 1811, sir, in Swan Alley, not far from the Artillery Ground. My father war a shoemaker—perhaps I ought to say a cobbler, sir he didn't make many shoes: good reason why, he was always a mendin' on 'em. When I was a very little un, I rek'lect partik'lar they was a-makin' the Regent's Canal as runs under the City Road, and I used to get out afore I was big enough to wear trousers, and make mud-pies out of the clay as was turned up. That was the best fun I ever knowed, that was; but didn't I get the strap when my father caught me at it? Ah, I knows what strap-sauce is well enough ! He wanted to teach me—cos I was the biggest boy—to make wax-ends, and I wanted to make mud-pies; and many's the lickin' I got along o' that there canal a-diggin'. I never passes the bridge now without thinkin' on it. Then, you know, I could see—had as good use of my eyes as anybody. Ha ! well ! 'tain't no use grievin'.

'Mother died, and left four on us when I was about five years old, and then we got more strap and less vittles, I can tell 'ee. Father got savage, an' took to drinkin', and we never dared to have a bit o' lark 'cept when he was out o' doors. One night, when he was gone to the public-house, we was all a-playin' and larkin' in the room, and my brother, out o' fun, pushed me right over the kit into the fire. I fell with my face slap in the middle of the hot coals, and was so fright-ned that I couldn't make no attempt to get out, cos my legs was up in the air again' the kit. My two brothers and sister sung out a good un, and a coman as lived up-stairs came down and picked me out. I was took off to the hospital, where I laid for seven months, and a'most died wi' brain-fever. Then I was sent home again, stone-blind, and father give me a hidin' for tumblin' into the fire, as if I hadn't had punishment enough. But I didn't care much for that. I had friends in the court, among the women and the gals, and I got a deal more vittles and kindness than I did afore.

'When I was old enough, I was sent to the Blind Asylum, where I learned to make baskets and mats. I can make clothes-baskets and hampers, and that sort of work, well enough; but the trade is so much cut up by the shops that it aint worth doin'. If I makes a basket for a washerwoman for three shillins, it costs me half-a-crown for the willows. It aint much better with the mats—the rope costs almost the money they fetch. I left the asylum when I was sixteen, and lived along with another blind man as made hampers for the wine-merchants. He had a pretty good trade, and I might ha' done well along of him if I could ha' carr'd home the goods; but it aint no go for a blind man to get about the streets o' London wi' five or six hampers on his head. I tried it once or twice, and got shoved head-foremost into a butcher's shop by some chaps as wanted a lark; so he couldn't send me out no more, and he couldn't go hisself. I had two years of that there hamper-work, and got the rheumatiz dreadful through workin' in a damp cellar all day long, and I was obliged to give it up—to go into the hospital again.

'When I came out I didn't know where to go, and what I was to do. My father had moved away somewhere, and my two brothers had gone to sea. So I went to my parish, and had a go of the workhouse for matter of a year. There was a blind man in there as played the fiddle uncommon well, and the overseer made him shew me a bit, and paid a goodish bit o' money for teachin' of me. I scraped away whenever they would let me, for I wanted to get out of the workhouse, and I picked up a tidy lot of tunes in four or five months. By the time I'd been at it a year, I thought I might manage to pick up a livin', and I turned out one mornin', when the summer was a-comin' on, and began fiddlin' in the streets. I didn't get much the first day—not quite sixpence I think 'twas—but I wouldn't go back upon the parish. I could lodge for a shillin' a week, and I could get a bit of broken vittles at times when folks wouldn't give me no money. I liked my liberty too well, after the confinement—first of the damp cellar, then of the hospital, and then in the workhouse—and I made up my mind to get my own livin' without bein' beholden to nobody. So I've a-fiddled pretty well ever since.

'When I were two-and-twenty, I took it into my head uncommon as how I should like to learn to read; so I went and applied at the Blind School in Red Lion Square, and used to go there and learn to read two or three nights of a week. There was a good many there, and some on 'em learned to read very well, and some couldn't learn nowher. I got on tolerabish. I went to the school more nor a year. We didn't pay nothin' for teachin'—only for the books: the books is very dear; the letters sticks up, and we feels 'em with our fingers. I gave four shillins for Isayer. I can read all on it,

and John's Gospel too. That's all I got. I can't afford to buy no more.

'At the Blind School I fell in with a young coman as was learnin' to read. I kep company with her for five year, and then I married her. We've a been married nigh upon twelve year. She was born blind—never had no eyes in her head, not at all. She can do everything in a house as well a'most as them as can see: she can cook a meal's vittles beautiful, when we got it to be cooked. She sews with her needle, and mends my clothes, and does the washin' and ironin'. We are often very bad off, partik'lar at this time of the year. People don't care much about fiddlin' and music in cold and wet weather: they walks away to keep themselves warm; and forgits to give a fellar a copper.

'I knows London all over 'cept some of the new streets, and I knows them when I been through 'em once. I goes from Islington, where I lives, to the City, three times a week. When I come to a street where a customer of mine lives, I begins and numbers the houses with my stick, and then I strikes up when I comes to the house, and plays till I gets my penny or my bread and cheese. I always eats a piece of bread in the mornin' afore I goes out: if I don't, I gits the stomach-ache. Sometimes I don't git no more all the day; but I gits bread and cheese at a house in Clerkenwell every Tuesday, and a good pint o' tea and a pound a'most o' bread every Friday in Little Saint Thomas Apostle. You see I can't fiddle very well, cos my right arm is shrivelled up wi' the fire, and I can't draw the bow rightly level with the bridge about I sits down; and in course I can't sit down while I am walkin' about the streets; so it aint many coppers I gits from chance customers. My reg'lar customers mostly gives me a penny a week: when they moves, I follers 'em wherever they goes: I can't afford to lose 'em; they brings me in, all on 'em, about three-and-sixpence a week, besides the vittles. 'Taint much vittles I eats at home, save on Sundays, and a bit o' bread for breakfast afore I starts out of a mornin'.

'There's lots o' blind men in London as gets a livin' without earnin' of it. I knows one as sits all day in the City Road a-readin' the Bible wi' his finger, and people thinks it's wonderful clever, and gives him a sight o' money. A pound a week aint nothin' to him. But that there's a imposition; there aint nothin' in it. I can read as well as he every bit; but people hadn't ought to get their bread by readin' the Bible and doin' of nothin': it aint respectable. I gives the people music: if they don't think it worth nothin', they gives me nothin' for it; if they do, they gives me a copper, and very glad to git it. There's some blind men as keeps standins in the street, and sells sticks, and braces, and padlocks, and key-rings; some on 'em drives a good trade. I knows one as got a family brought up quite respectable—the boys is 'prentices, and the gals goes to service. I should like to keep a standin' myself if I had a few poun's to begin with; but, Lord! I never had but one sovereign in my hand in my life, and that wasn't mine. There's lots o' blind men goes about wi' dogs tied to a string: them's beggars. When a blind man drives a dog, he've a made up his mind to be a gentleman. A dog aint of no real use to a blind man in London—not a bit in the world. A dog is a blind beggar's sign; and when the dog carries a tray in his mouth to catch the coppers, then there's two beggars instead o' one. There's a sight o' blind men in London as can see as well as you can. They starts out when 'tis dark wi' great patches over their eyes, and goes with a boy—a young thief—to lead 'em, among the crowds and in the markets of a Saturday night. When they gets into the thick of it they sings out: "Good Christians! for the love of Heaven bestow your charity upon the poor blind—and God preserue your precious eyesight." That's their chant. They gits a lot o' money from the people, partik'lar on Saturday nights, when the

small change is flyin' about: them's robbers, an' nothin' else. There's some poor fellows as I knows as can't do nothin' for a livin'. Blind men is often weak in the head—a bit silly-like. They mostly lives in work-houses; sometimes they tries it on wi' lucifer-matches: they likes to get out in the sun in summer-time and fine weather: I pities them, poor fellows! 'tis hard luck they've got.

'I'm always cheerful-minded 'cept when I'm very hungry and got nothin' to take home to my wife. We don't want much—'tis very little as keeps her; but I don't like to go home without nothin' in my pocket: then I sometimes thinks 'tis too bad, and gets low-spirited; but I soon goes to sleep and forgits it, cos I'm so tired when I goes home. My wife earns somethin' most weeks; sometimes she looks arter little children when their mothers goes out a-charin'. She haves three-halfpence a day for a child: when we got two babies for a week that makes eighteenpence, and pays the rent. A good thing that would be if we could do it always. She's very fond o' little babies, and knows how to do for 'em as well as a mother a'most, though she never had none of her own.

'Saturday's my best day. My customers knows I can't play the fiddle a Sunday, and so I gits a good allowance of vittles, and fills my bag. Thus a butcher not far off as gives me a reg'lar good stew o' bones an' cuttin's every Saturday night. That's my Sunday's dinner, and a famous dinner my wife makes on it. There's a policeman out here as collars me reg'lar whenever my bag's a bit full, and turns it all out, and axes me where I stole it. I says: "I'll answer that there question at the station-house, if you likes to take me there;" but he never takes me up. That's a noo-sance, that is.

'I never buys no clothes; I git as much as I want gave me. The boots is the worst. In course I never gits them till they're worn out; and as I can't afford to have 'em mended, when it rains my feet is always in the wet; but I'm pretty well used it—that's one good thing. This time o' the year 'tis very bad: there is so much bad weather, and so few people about, a blind fiddler might as well stay at home. There's been nothin' but rain all the week. I only earned twopence yesterday, and that just made up the rent as was overdue: there was nothin' for supper, though I'd had nothin' all day but a bit o' bread in the mornin', and to-day there was none for me to have, so I come away without any. My wife have had her vittles to-day, that's one comfort: she went out afore I did to go a-washin'; she'll earn sixpence besides her vittles—and we shall have a good supper to-night, thank God!

'I've had a good many accidents in my time. There is so many omnibuses now, that a blind man can't venture off the pavement. It takes me half an hour sometimes to get across from the "Angel" into the City Road. I've been knocked down by cabs and omnibuses six or seven times; I never got much hurt myself, but my fiddle have been broke all to pieces several times. I always mend it myself, but it's a deal o' trouble and loss of time while the glue's a-dryin'. Drunken men is worse than omnibuses. I've been beat about by drunken men many's the time, cos I couldn't play the tunes they wanted. I never goes into a public-house now: I had so many tricks put upon me, that I finds it better to keep away. I was a'most killed once by a lot o' Irishmen: they knocked me about dreadful, and filled my fiddle full o' beer, and then made me play upon it, and cut the strings while I was a-playin'. They done that cos I'm a very little fellow, and got no strength. That's too bad! Sometimes gentlefolks is none too civil. Just afore I come to your gate, I tried at a house a little way down the road: a gentleman come a-rushin' out, catches me by the throat, and twistis me roun' and roun', and shoves me over the steps, a-swearin' as how he'd got two scrapers at his

door a'ready, and didn't want another. That aint civil, seein' I fiddles as well as I can, and he got no call to pay for it if he ha'n't a mind to.

'I don't know as I can tell you anythin' more, sir. You see I don't know much of the world. All days is pretty much alike to me: wet or dry, hot or cold, is all the difference between one day and another. We does the best we can. When the sun shines, and people walks about and enjoys themselves, I gits a little money, and my wife and I is cheerful and contented. When the bad wintry weather comes down upon us, we do feel what it is to be hungry and poor; but we can't help it, and it aint no use frettin'. We might git into the workhouse in the winter if we liked, but then we must sell up all our sticks, and I should lose all my customers where I plays reg'lar, and have to begin the world agin when we come out in the summer. It wouldn't do, that wouldn't.

'My wife's a merry little ooman, and can go without a dinner and never grumble: many's the day she gits no vittles, no more than myself. When there aint no vittles in the cupboard, and no means of earnin' any, I tells her not to git up, and so she lies abed all day, cos 'tis easier fastin' in bed than when you are up and about. If I brings home anythin', then she gits up and cooks it, and then we're all right. We always hopes for better times, and if we don't live to see 'em, why then we shan't grieve for the want of 'em. I plays the song, *There's a good time comin'*, boys, and my wife sings it. There's no harm in hopin' that we may all live to see it. That's all I've got to say, sir.'

With that this uncomplaining heir of adverse fortune rose from his seat, placed his fiddle under his arm, and thanking me warmly for all favours, groped his way up the kitchen stairs and took his departure. I have given his history as he detailed it: it has had no colouring and requires no comment at my hands. It is just one of those revelations of the mysteries of common life which are only remarkable because the world in general has not chosen to make them object of remark. But verily it has a use and a signification which discontented respectability, cushioned in its easy-chair, may do well to ponder.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

December 1861.

As usual, the approach of the winter solstice wakes us up from the inactivity produced by autumnal holidays, and law, physic, and philosophy, to say nothing of pleasure, are girding up their loins for what is to happen next. Michaelmas term having come and gone, clients are wondering whether Hilary, which is close at hand, will prove propitious—and so there is excitement of some kind for all parties. Our societies, philosophical, scientific, and otherwise, are bestirring themselves, have opened their sessions with more or less of *clat*, and stretched out their plan of action for the next six months, which in most instances differs but little from the accustomed routine. The Royal Society have held their anniversary, on which occasion Lord Rosse, the president, delivered his annual address to the Fellows—being a *resumé* of scientific memorabilia, with obituary notices of deceased *seigneurs*—and presented the Copley Medal to Professor Owen for his zoological researches; one of the Royal Medals to Mr Newport for his investigations into the subject of the reproduction of animal life by impregnation as exemplified in amphibia—said to be by competent judges one of the most remarkable and important contributions to microscopic anatomy that has of late made its appearance. The second Royal Medal had been awarded to Lord Rosse himself for his astronomical labours, chiefly with reference to Observations on the Nebule—those extraordinary stellar bodies of which the monster telescope has already rendered

some account, and will yet render more—the golden testimonial was consequently handed to him by the vice-president. Then followed the election of the new council, and the English bond of brotherhood—a dinner. Besides all this the Royal Society have had another paper from Faraday, still further extending and confirming the discoveries in electricity and magnetism, which have so long engaged the attention of that distinguished philosopher. Mr Wheatstone, too, has given them some additional instances of his inventive genius in his paper on the phenomena of what is called binocular vision, as illustrated by that astonishing instrument, the *stereoscope*. You look through two eye-pieces at two pictures precisely alike placed in a dark chamber, when the effect is such that the two appear as one only, but in full and most striking relief: in spite of yourself you are obliged to believe that the figures and objects are raised, standing out round even to the minutest details, while the background seems to have receded to a considerable distance. Still more marvellous is the *pseudoscope*—an instrument similar in principle, but playing such pranks with the phenomena of vision, that all ordinary notions of the subject resolve themselves into amazement, and ordinary words are inadequate to express the combinations. Things which are farthest off appear the nearest, a globe is no longer a globe but a basin, convex is concave, and solid is hollow! After this, who shall aver that seeing is believing? There will be something else to say on this matter before long. Meantime I may tell you that the first of the twelve Prince-Albert-authorized lectures has been delivered at the Society of Arts by the Master of Trinity, Dr Whewell; the others will follow forthwith; and as they will doubtless be published, students who cannot come to town will have an opportunity of reading them.

Among a select few, certain new combinations and applications in electro-telegraphy are talked about, which greatly excel all that has yet been accomplished in that wondrous science. If all go well with the inventor, we are to see the results next year. Enterprise is still busy with that which is accomplished: an additional cable, similar to the one sunk across the Channel, has been advertised for—ingenious brains are at work trying to devise a system of universal symbols which may be used and understood by all nations alike in their telegraphic communications; and, more than all, Steinheil is reported to have discovered a means for sending a concentrated shock or flash to any distance along the wires without the necessity of repeating it at intermediate stations. Thus, as Tennyson says, we are ever waking upon 'science grown to more.'

There are so many things talked about at our scientific gatherings that it would be hopeless to attempt to report one-half of them: we can only deal with the most important. Among these Mr Mercer's patent process for 'contracting the fibres of calico, and of obtaining on the calico thus prepared colours of much brilliancy,' is still regarded by chemists as likely to lead to valuable results. This was brought forward at the last meeting of the British Association, and described as the discovery that 'a solution of cold but caustic soda acts peculiarly on cotton fibre, immediately causing it to contract; and although the soda can be readily washed out, yet the fibre has undergone a change. Thus, taking a coarse cotton fabric, and acting upon it by the proper solution of caustic soda, this could be made much finer in appearance; and if the finest calico made in England—known as 180 picks to the web—be thus acted on, it immediately appears as fine as 260 picks. Stockings of open weaving assume a much finer texture by the condensation process; but the effect of the alteration is most strikingly shewn by colours: the tint of pink cotton velvet becomes deepened to an intense degree; and printed calicoes, especially with colours hitherto applied with little

satisfaction—such as lilac—come out with strength and brilliancy, besides producing fabrics cheaply, finer than can be possibly woven by hand.' The strength, too, is increased by this process; for a string of calico which breaks with a weight of thirteen ounces when not soaked, will bear twenty ounces when half condensed by the caustic soda.

Our neighbours across the Channel have not been idle, as you would believe could you see the numerous communications submitted to the French Académie. M. A. Dumont has sent one entitled 'Experiments on the application of electro-magnetism as a motive power,' in the description of which he states, that 'if in the production of great power the electro-magnetic force is inferior to that of steam, it becomes equal to it, and perhaps superior in the production of small power, which may be subdivided, varied, and introduced into employments or trades requiring but little capital, and where the absolute value of the mechanical power is less essential than the facility of producing instantaneously and at pleasure the power itself.' In this point of view electro-magnetic power comes to complete, not to supersede, that of steam.

In connection with these results I may tell you of those obtained by M. Baumgartner in another part of the continent. With respect to the effects of atmospheric electricity on telegraph wires, he says that the deflections produced are of two kinds—small and great, and that the law of the former is discoverable. 'The observations made at Vienna and at Grätz appear to shew that during the same day the electric currents move from those two places to Sömmering, which is more elevated. During the night the direction is reversed, and the change takes place after the rising and setting of the sun. The regular current, too, is less disturbed by the irregular currents when the air is dry and the sky serene, than when the weather is rainy.'

While the northern line from Vienna was being fixed, 'the workmen frequently complained of a kind of spasms which they felt in handling the wires,' but which 'ceased as soon as they took the precaution not to touch the wires with naked hands. These spasms were most frequent and intense in Styria, the highest region of the line. Thus, near Kranichfeld, a workman received a shock sufficiently violent to throw him down and paralyse his right arm.'

'On the 17th August 1849, a storm which had broken out at Olmütz extended to Frielitz, a distance of ten miles. A workman employed at this latter station, while fixing the wires, was also thrown down by a sudden shock, and those parts of his fingers which had touched the wires appeared as if burnt. At this time the sky was perfectly serene at Frielitz.'

You will perhaps exclaim here: 'Enough of magnetism for the present;' had the facts, however, been less important than they are acknowledged to be, I should not have dwelt so long on them. Now, to return to the Académie. M. Lewy has brought from New Granada the *Arracacha*, an esculent which he hopes may be introduced into France, as a resource in case of future potato disease. It possesses many valuable properties, but does not transplant easily. We are told that a M. Goudot lost his life in 1847 in his attempt to enrich his country with 'this precious alimentary root.' Other academicians are discussing the subject of cedron (*Sinaba cedron*), which I mentioned a short time since as a newly-discovered remedy against serpent-bites and intermittent fever. It has been subjected to chemical analysis, and the active principle shewn to be cedrine, more persistent and intensely bitter than strychnine. A further quantity of the seeds has been received, and if they possess a real therapeutic value, the medical world will soon be instructed of the fact.

M. J. Durocher states that he has succeeded in

making artificial dolomite, by exposing porous limestone to the action of magnesian vapours inside a gun-barrel, subjected for three hours to a red heat. The result is a dolomite very similar to that which exists in such great abundance in the Alps; and the experimentalist considers that 'limestone rocks have passed into the state of dolomite under the influence of magnesian vapours rising from the depths of the earth.' The fact is curious, and is in favour of the theory which derives all matter from one single primary element. Apropos of this artificial geology, there is a rumour from Lodi—for which, by the way, I do not vouch—that Professor Gobini produces all the phenomena of mountain formations and stratifications on a small scale, by the cooling of a heated mass of mineral and earthy substances. If true, this may give us some insight into the *modus operandi* of nature in the phenomena of geology: at all events, out of such experiments as the two here mentioned a practical benefit sometimes proceeds, as chemical discovery did out of alchemy; and perhaps they may have a bearing on the prize-question proposed by the Royal Academy of Sciences at Berlin: 100 ducats will be given 'for the best work on the nature and mode of action, and resulting constitution, of hydraulic mortar, including the constitution of zeolites generally, but especially of those produced in the solidification of mortar.' The essays may be written in French, German, or Latin, at the pleasure of the author: they are to be sent in by March 1854, and the prize will be awarded in the following month of July. Now that subaqueous and subterranean structures are becoming more and more a necessity, this question is the more important.

Next to touch on physiology: M. Plouviez finds that in cases of suspended animation from the use of chloroform, 95 per cent. of the cases may be saved by insufflation, and 75 per cent. by alternate pressure of the breast and abdomen. He shews also that asphyxia, or suspended animation from drowning, is a very serious matter, because in addition to the chill there is the constant introduction of water into the terminal bronchi—a fact, as he says, not sufficiently regarded, but one which effectually prevents the due penetration of air, as is shewn by the dissection of animals which have perished by drowning. He states further, that three minutes' submersion produces the most complete signs of death, when, 'if the animal be taken out and laid on a table, the beatings of the heart can be no longer felt; but if an acupuncture needle be plunged into this organ it oscillates strongly until the ninth or tenth minute, and sometimes a little longer. Never,' he continues, 'have I seen the oscillations cease at the end of two or three minutes except the stay in the water has been prolonged beyond five minutes.' At times not the least drop of blood would follow incisions made on different parts of the body; but as soon as animation began to revive the wounds began to bleed, 'proving that the capillary circulation had been momentarily destroyed notwithstanding the oscillations of the needle, which clearly indicated a movement in the heart, but not sufficient to force the blood into the remoter branches of the circulatory system. It has thus never once happened to me to be able to restore an animal to life in which the needle had ceased to vibrate, while cerebral life has often been seen to return when the capillary circulation had ceased.'

M. Plouviez concludes his remarks with a few practical suggestions, and shews that the water which may have lodged in the air-passages near the throat may be made to escape by a comfortable position of the body, and that it cannot be removed, as is supposed, by means of a pump. 'Place the body,' he says, 'out of the reach of cold; let the head incline downwards, and open the mouth to let the water flow out; all of which will not occupy more than twenty seconds.'

'Employ insufflation alternately with pressure of the breast and abdomen, suspending the pressure during inspiration—the nose of the bellows to be introduced into one of the nostrils, the other to be left free.'

'Promote the absorption of water from the bronchial vessels, which can only be local. In asphyxia the venous system is always gorged; hence bleeding is one of the most powerful means for this purpose;' and last: 'The application of heat, under all forms and to all parts of the body, is a useful agent not to be neglected.' This is rather a long account, but I send it you as our medical men say that it embodies some new views on the philosophy of drowning.

M. Letillois announces the discovery of a colourless liquid, which 'will fix in a durable manner on white paper all the colours of the prism,' but he has not yet made it public; and this reminds me of an analogous result lately obtained in America.

Mr Hill of New York has succeeded in fixing colours by photography, and produces what he calls Hylotypes. He says: 'I have forty-five specimens, all of which present the several colours, true to a tint, and with a degree of brilliancy never seen in the richest Daguerreotype; and this is true also of the whites and blacks. The pictures have much the appearance of enamelling, and I believe are equally durable; for it is very difficult to efface them by scouring, and, as far as I can judge, they are not acted upon by light. My success in quickening the plates has been equally gratifying; and I have but little doubt of being able to operate in diffusing light instantaneously, having already reduced the time of sitting to much less than that required for Daguerreotyping. I have never yet made a partial failure. The folds of the linen are always well defined. Blue or solarised linen is unknown in my process, and there is always a strength and clearness in the whites unattainable by mercury. During the last winter I have several times taken a view, in which there is a deep-red house, while the ground was covered with snow. For experiment, I exposed the plate so long as to reduce the bright red of the house to a very light red, while at the same time the white snow was developed with a beautiful whiteness.' After this, seeing that Becquerel is working at the same subject, and that prizes are offered for improvements in photography, we may expect to see something excellent.

Our meteorologists are much interested by a report recently published by Dr Buist, of the observatory at Bombay, on the rainy season of 1849, the most remarkable which has occurred in India during the present century. Extreme drought prevailed for a time most partially and capriciously. From the 22d to the 24th of June an extraordinary and violent atmospheric commotion took place over the whole region, from Calcutta to Aden, a distance of three thousand miles, and the barometer fell almost unprecedentedly low. Hurricane storms followed. At Bombay sixteen inches of rain fell in three days, and from that time there were continual falls in different parts of the country. The disturbance was not confined to tropical latitudes, for, as many persons will remember, one of the most furious rain and hail storms on record broke out in the south of England on the 26th July. The disturbance was accompanied, too, by anomalous conditions. At Madras the air was dry, although rain fell heavily; while at Aden it was precisely the reverse. At Mahabaleshwar hail fell without interruption from the 27th to the 29th of July; and yet in some places rain was so scarce that famine seemed imminent, and the plantations of sugarcane were pulled up to keep the cattle alive. Then in August, the rivers of the Punjab, owing to the heavy fall in the mountains of the north-western frontier, devastated the country on either side, and the Jhylum, fed with water from the hills of Cashmere, came down with overwhelming fury. At Shahpore, the government salt-stores were washed away; as also the

cantonments of the British troops, who were forced to a hasty retreat of five miles. The river burst through all its barriers, and flooded the country for hundreds of leagues. As the report states, 'the bastions, outworks, and other works of Mooltan, which a year before had for four months defied all the efforts of our artillery, melted into the flood. On the 16th three magnificent domes fell, and at seven on the morning of the 17th the enormous cupola of the Bahawal Huk came thundering to the ground with a noise like the explosion of a tremendous mine. The whole structures were built of unburnt bricks.' Such a flood, it is said, has never yet been known in India. It went all down the course of the Indus. At Hyderabad, also, in Southern India, the Godavery burst into the city, levelling all the buildings in its way, and rose until the highest parts of the town were three feet under water. Such, in brief, is the substance of Dr Buist's report, the most comprehensive, perhaps, which has ever appeared on the meteorological phenomena of India.

You will remember my telling you of Dr Knoblecher's Nile discoveries. They have excited the most lively interest in our Geographical Society, and serve as a counterpoise to the enthusiasm got up for Lieutenant Pim, who is to go to the shores of Siberia—if the Emperor Nicholas will let him—to look for Sir John Franklin: a forlorn-hope. But to come back to the Nile: it is now supposed that further researches will tend to confirm the statements made by Ptolemy so many centuries ago. 'The discovery of the mysterious sources of the giant stream of the African continent, the largest river of the Old World, perhaps even of the entire globe, remains,' we are now told, 'the greatest problem of geography.' These sources, it is believed, will be found not far from Kenia, some 370 geographical miles beyond the farthest point yet reached by Knoblecher. Lake Tchad, too, is being explored by an English boat, so that some day we may expect Africa will cease to be a 'problem.' Meantime the interior of Australia is a problem, and people are beginning to inquire after the missing Leichardt as well as the missing Franklin. And after all, there still remains that undiscovered Kafiristan, somewhere to the north-west of India, which, though long termed the opprobrium of British geography, is yet a problem.

A little item from St Petersburg, and I close. M. Bouniakowsky has presented to the Imperial Academy of Sciences a paper on a 'curious application of the law of probabilities to the approximate determination of the limits of the real loss of men experienced by a troop during battle.' The object is to give mathematical formulae, whereby the proposed results may be arrived at any time during an engagement, as well as after it. It is a question, however, whether captains and colonels will be willing to stop in the middle of the strife to work a sum. You will perhaps say, what few will care to gainsay, that M. Bouniakowsky might devote his calculations to a more peaceful purpose. And so I close this year's gossip by wishing you a Merry Christmas.

'GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.'

BY THE REV. JAMES GILBORNE LYONS, LL.D.

On! sweep the loud harp's tuneful strings,
Break forth, like song-birds after showers,
To tell how He—the King of kings—
Came to this ruined world of ours.
If angels beamed on Judah's hills,
And bid those watchers then rejoice,
Shall we, whose ears that message fills,
Mock with cold hearts the sacred voice!

When He—the Son of God—was born,
We walked in darkness far astray;
But, fair as Greenland's arctic morn,
He chased our long, drear night away.
His head that manger cradle pressed—
He toiled and suffered many a year,
To give the fainting nations rest,
To dry the mourner's bitter tear.

Who, who that ever breathed on earth—
Bard, prophet, hero, saint, or sage—
Gave cause like *this* for righteous mirth
To men of every clime and age!
Oh! it were shameful and unwise
Before those waning lights to fall,
Yet look with cold and careless eyes
On HIM—THE CENTRAL SUN OF ALL.

Go, tell the trembling slave of guilt,
Whose breast is sad, whose eye is dim,
The Just One's sacred blood was spilt
To win back Heaven's lost smile for him.
All, all may join His glorious bands
In that far world of light and bliss,
Who keep His pure and high commands
With meek and faithful hearts in this!

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